CHAPTER III.

TENANCY PROBLEM IN MYSORE AND THE COMMITTEE'S APPROACH.

The description of the country's land distribution pattern as consisting "of numerous small holdings, a large proportion of them being uneconomic, a small number of middle peasants and a sprinkling of substantial owners" applies to the pattern in Mysore State also. There are 24.6 lakhs of holdings in this State comprising 267.8 lakhs of acres (vide Appendix VI). The average size of a holding is 10.87 acres. 99.44% of the holdings are below 100 acres and these make up 89.80% of the extent. Nearly two-thirds of the holdings are below 10 acres and the total area of such holdings is just a quarter of the total extent. Holdings between 10 acres and 100 acres constitute nearly 33% of the total number and the area included in them is 65% of the total extent. 0.44% of the holdings are in the group of 100-200 acres and comprise 5.36% of total extent. Holdings above 200 acres comprise 4.84% of the extent, though their number is only 0.12% of the total number. The largest number of holdings is in the size group of 2.5 to 5 acres.

Though the average holding is 10.87 acres for the State as a whole the district average varies from 3.59 acres in North Kanara district to 16.68 acres in Gulbarga district.

2. Out of the total area of 267.8 lakhs of acres 206.4 lakhs of acres are under personal cultivation. 61.4 lakhs of acres or 22.95% of the land is cultivated by tenants. The percentage of land under tenant cultivation varies from district to district (Appendix VII). Hassan district has the smallest proportion (2.84%) under tenant cultivation. South Kanara district with 65.86% under tenant cultivation has the largest proportion. The percentage for the State excluding South Kanara would be 20.6. The percentage of land leased out increases with the size of the holding, as will be clear from the following figures:

Range of size of holdings.	Percentage of land leased out.
Below 15 acres	14.93
15-25 acres	15.94
25-50 acres	22.45
50-100 acres	24.59
Above 100 acres	92.71

Lands owned by persons with more than 100 acres account for 44% of the total extent of 61.40 lakhs of acres leased out to tenants.

3. According to the 1951 census 71.2% of the total population is dependent on agriculture in the areas included in the new Mysore State. 47.6% is principally sustained as owner-cultivators, 9.3% as tenant cultivators, 10.9% as agricultural labourers and 3.4% as rent receivers. Within the agricultural population itself, 67% are owner-cultivators, 13% tenant cultivators, 15% agricultural labourers and only 5% rent-receivers. Man-land ratio is 1.76 acres of sown area per head of total population or 2.47 acres of sown area per head of agricultural population.

South Kanara (55.69%) and North Kanara (55.71%) districts have got the largest proportion of tenants out of agricultural population while Hassan (3.32%) has got the least proportion of

tenants.

4. From the foregoing analysis it will be clear that the agricultural economy of the State largely approaches the ideal of peasant proprietorship. Only 28% of the people working on land are landless and the owner-cultivators are more than 13-fold the rentier classes. 99.44% of the holdings comprising 89.80% of the area will not exceed the ceiling if it is 100 acres. The provisions of tenancy law will affect only the rentier classes and persons with large holdings. The total number of these is only 3.4% of the total population. The tenant class numbering 9.3% of the total population will not only gain economic security and social status, but will also have greater incentive to produce more. The importance of the last mentioned item cannot be belittled in view of the fact that nearly a quarter of the land is under tenancy.

BASIC OBJECTIVES OF TENANCY REFORMS.

5. The objectives of land reform programme set out in the Second Five Year Plan have as their background the need to enhance the capacity of Indian agriculture to provide the surplus needed to support industrial development. This need as well as the wider economic considerations on which the fulfilment of the Second Five Year Plan depends both lead to the conclusion that a substantial increase in agricultural production, diversification of the agricultural economy and the building up of efficient and progressive system of agricultural production are among the most urgent tasks to be accomplished. The objectives arising against this background are summed up as follows in the Plan.

"Firstly, to remove such impediments upon agricultural production as arise from the character of the agrarian structure, and secondly, to create conditions for evolving as speedily as may be possible an agrarian economy with high levels of efficiency and productivity. These aspects are inter-related, some measures of land reform bearing more directly on the first aim, others to a greater extent on the second. Thus, the abolition of intermediaries and the protection given to tenants are intended to give the tiller of the soil his rightful place in the agrarian system and, by reducing or eliminating burdens he has borne in the past, to provide him with fuller incentives for increasing agricultural production. Similarly, to bring tenants into direct relation with the State and to put an end to the tenant-landlord nexus are essential steps in the establishment of a stable rural economy. In the conditions of India large disparities in the distribution of wealth and income are inconsistent with economic progress in any sector. This consideration applies with even greater force to land. The area of land available for cultivation is necessarily limited. In the past rights in land were the principal factor which determined both social status and economic opportunity for different groups in the rural population. For building up a progressive rural economy, it is essential that disparities in the ownership of land should be greatly reduced. In view of the existing pattern of distribution and size of agricultural holdings, redistribution of land in excess of a ceiling may yield relatively limited results. Nevertheless, it is important that some effective steps should be taken in this direction during the second five year plan so as to afford opportunities to landless sections of the rural population to gain in social status and to feel a sense of opportunity equally with other sections of the community. Reduction of disparities in the ownership of land is also essential for developing a co-operative rural economy, for, co-operation thrives best in homogeneous groups in which there are no large inequalities. Thus, programmes for abolishing intermediary tenures, giving security to tenants and bringing tenants into direct relationship with the State with a view to conferring ownership upon them are steps which lead to

the establishment of an agrarian economy based predominantly on peasant ownership."

6. Ideas of tenancy legislation are fast changing. This is reflected in the frequency with which the tenancy laws are being recast. These rapid changes have effected the enforcement of law also. It is noticed that in spite of new legislation on the statute book, the old practices still obtain in the field. There are also gaps in the laws which render them ineffective. The anxiety to balance meticulously the respective interests of the landlord and the tenant has resulted in the laws becoming complicated and beyond the understanding of the common peasantry. Attempts by legislation "to harmonise the relations between landlords and tenants and not to widen the gulf between them" have thus practically failed. The only remedy to safeguard the position of the tenants appears therefore to be to end the tenant-landlord relationship.

7. Any scheme of tenancy reforms should also encourage increase in agricultural production to meet the demands of the fast increasing population of the country. The limit for bringing new lands under cultivation having been almost reached, intensive cultivation would be the only means to achieve increased production. The existence of tenancy hampers intensive cultivation. The landlord is not always interested in improving the land. He generally prefers to invest his resources to extend his holding rather than improve it. The tenant on the other hand lacks both the capital as well as the incentive to make improvements. The increase in personal cultivation resulting from the elimination of the landlord-tenant relationship will therefore ma a substantial contribution towards larger production.

We cannot also ignore the expectation raised in the minds of the landless population of receiving land through redistribution. The large mass of landless population would acquire security and increased bargaining power, apart from a higher social status and greater employment, by attaining the status of landholders throug schemes of redistribution.

8. These two objectives, namely, (1) elimination of the landlord-tenant relationship and (2) redistribution of land to satisfy the aspirations of the landless have mainly inspired our recommendations contained in the succeeding chapters.

9. The practical considerations which have weighed with us cannot be expressed better than has been done in the following quotation from the United Nations publication on the Progress of Land Reforms, released in 1954.

"The problems of tenant security are evidently very different in the advanced countries and in the under-developed countries. In some of the more advanced countries the problem now is to reconcile a high degree of security for the tenant farmer with the efficiency of the farming system. In the underdeveloped countries the problem is to introduce protection for the tenant and to make it effective.

"A similar contrast appears in regard to rent control. In advanced countries a degree of rent control which reduces rents considerably may cause the land owner to cease to fulfil his functions in maintaining the fixed capital of the farm, and may favour inefficient farming. In the underdeveloped countries the problem is to reduce exorbitant rents to levels sufficient to enable the cultivator to make a living."

10. We have recognised that in a State comprising areas whic had far advanced in the field of tenancy legislation as well as areas where tenancy law was almost unknown, it may become immediately necessary to tone down the law in some respects in the advanced areas to facilitate uniform development all over the State.